



County of Los Angeles CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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February 24, 2005

To: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David E. Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE COUNTY'S TELECOMMUTING PROGRAM

On November 16, 2004, your Board approved Supervisor Burke's motion that instructed my office to review and reassess the County's Telecommuting Program and provide recommendations to update the County's Telecommuting Policies and other related actions. We are submitting this preliminary report and plan to submit a final report by April 25, 2005.

Preliminary Findings

Pursuant to the Board motion, my office developed and transmitted a survey to the department heads which queried them on telecommuting program participation, policy, training, evaluation, and recommendations for improvement. Thus far, ninety-five percent of the County departments have responded to the survey. We are now seeking additional departmental information to clarify the responses to the questionnaire. **Overall, the survey responses yielded extensive information about telecommuting within the County, and the detailed survey results will be included in our final report to the Board.**

Program Participation

Preliminary analysis of the statistics shows that 51 percent of County departments have employees that telecommute, ranging from a low of two employees to over 650. There are approximately 1,150 telecommuters in the County. The Departments of Public Social Services (DPSS), Mental Health (DMH) and Children and Family Services (DCFS) have a combined total of 862 of the 1,150 (75%) telecommuters Countywide. The remainder is distributed unevenly across departments.

Departments indicated that there were two primary reasons for participation in the telecommuting program: 1) support of clean air efforts and compliance with SCAQMD's Rule 2202; and 2) improved employee productivity and morale. Several departments noted a reduction in the amount of overtime, sick, and personal time taken by employees who telecommute.

Telecommuting Policies and Training

Fifty-five percent of the participating departments have additional requirements or policies for telecommuters other than the County's Telecommuting Policy, and 15 percent of the participating departments provide training for telecommuters, and supervisors and managers of telecommuters beyond what is included in the initial County training. Of the largest participating departments, (DPSS, DCFS, DMH), only DMH has additional requirements or policies for telecommuters other than the County's Telecommuting Policy, and none of these departments has an annual training requirement for telecommuters, and supervisors and managers of telecommuters. In fact, only one participating department in the County has an annual training requirement for telecommuters.

Monitoring and Evaluating Telecommuters

Though participating departments varied on their selection criteria for employee participation selection, they all had a mechanism for monitoring job performance. Monitoring was primarily done on an employee-by-employee basis to measure each individual's daily performance. While telecommuters are required to be available during the workday by e-mail or by telephone, and to meet with managers on their return to discuss their prior day work progress, participating departments make no distinction between telecommuters and non-telecommuters with respect to compiling productivity data. Therefore, there are no separate statistics available to measure the performance of telecommuters, and none of the participating departments perform any additional oversight of employees who telecommute. Although none of the participating departments cited specific examples, many indicated that the employee's telecommuting participation would be terminated if performance was unsatisfactory.

Non-participating Departments

The preliminary results show 44 percent of County departments *do not* have employees who participate in the telecommuting program, but five of the non-participating departments indicated they would consider telecommuting if there were a centralized telecommuting center in the County. Reasons cited for non-participation include: department size, lack of staffing, providing direct service support, and workload requirements to be in the office or court.

Improving the County's Telecommuting Program

Although we estimate there are approximately 1,150 telecommuters within the County, our preliminary analysis shows that there is no uniform standard across County departments governing telecommuting except the use of the County's Telecommuting Policy. In addition, no oversight exists of the telecommuting function in the County. While the survey responses do not show major deficiencies within the County Telecommuting Program, there is room for improvement in several areas of the County's Program, including: updating the Telecommuting Policy to provide better direction through uniform standards to participating County departments; the creation of a separate time-card coding for telecommuters; and the development of County-wide and department-specific telecommuter training.

If you need additional information, please contact Eddie Washington at (213) 893-2479, Victoria Pipkin-Lane at (213) 974-2495, or Craig Hirakawa at (213) 974-1347.

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c: Each Department Head